



THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY

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Repeal the "assault weapons" ban or pay the price in November, Libertarians warn Bob Dole

WASHINGTON, DC — Bob Dole and other U.S. Senate Republicans should follow the lead of the House of Representatives and immediately repeal the so-called "assault weapons" ban, the Libertarian Party urged today.

If they don't, Libertarian candidates may use this issue against them in November.

"If the GOP doesn't stand up strongly for the Second Amendment, it will cost them votes in this election — and possibly a few Congressional seats," predicted Steve Dasbach, national chair of America's third-largest political party.

The U.S. House repealed the two-year-old ban on some semiautomatic, assault-style weapons last week on a bipartisan 239-173 vote.

"But the number of Republicans willing to vote for Second Amendment rights keeps shrinking," said Dasbach. "When the ban passed in 1994, it was because 38 Republicans voted for it. Last week, 42 Republicans voted against the repeal. In other words, four more Republican Congressmen voted against the Second Amendment in 1996 than in 1994."

Even worse, said Dasbach, "Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, the likely GOP presidential candidate, seems determined to stonewall any 'assault weapons' repeal effort, and not even allow it come to the Senate floor for a vote." In fact, at a press conference on March 21, Dole said repealing the gun ban is "not a priority."

One thing that may wake up Republicans on this issue, said Dasbach, is the threat of losing elections in November.

"If Republicans drop the ball, we'll definitely make this a campaign issue," he promised. "Libertarian candidates routinely get between 5% and 20% of the vote in many elections — more than enough to swing a close race. And we will swing votes against Republicans if they block action on repealing this gun ban."

The Libertarian Party expects to run more than 1,000 candidates for public office in 1996, including 218 or more candidates for the U.S. House alone.

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